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ABSTRACT

Reaffirming that all students, regardless of home language or socioeconomic background, can and must have an equal opportunity to excel in reading, this booklet presents 10 recommendations that form the basis of a comprehensive and balanced reading program to help children in California learn to read. Recommendations in the booklet address: (1) implementing a research-based balanced reading program that combines skills development with literature and language-rich activities; (2) providing teachers with diagnostic tools to modify instruction continuously; (3) emphasizing early intervention for children by mid-first grade; (4) establishing clear standards at each grade level; (5) redesigning teacher credential programs; (6) providing a high-quality preschool experience to all children; (7) supplying a large number of high quality, appropriate print and electronic instructional materials; (8) mobilizing all resources to make reading a priority in the elementary grades; (9) working with the entire community to ensure that every child can read; and (10) allocating resources to provide necessary support to teach reading in every public school. A call to action (specific actions for teachers, administrators, local school boards, parents, communities, the California Department of Education, and universities), a sample reading curriculum timeline, and a 38-item selected bibliography are attached. (RS)

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Every Child a Reader

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The Report of the California Reading Task Force

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION · SACRAMENTO · 1995

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The fate of empires depends on the education of youth.

Aristotle

Introduction

Teaching children to read must be our highest priority.

THERE IS A CRISIS IN CALIFORNIA THAT DEMANDS OUR IMMEDIATE attention. National and state reports indicate that a majority of California's children cannot read at basic levels. This reading failure begins in the early grades and has a harmful effect for a lifetime. Only a call to action at the highest levels, one that can marshal both human and fiscal resources and bring this story to the public, can be expected to address this crisis.

The 1984 publication, *Becoming a Nation of Readers*, stressed the critical importance of reading for the individual and for the nation. It concluded that reading should be our highest priority and called for a blend of skills development and literature, language, and comprehension for a balanced and effective reading program.

The urgency of this reading crisis resulted in the creation of a Reading Task Force by State Superintendent of Public Instruction Delaine Eastin. Her charge to the Task Force was to develop a set of recommendations for both immediate and long-term action to improve student achievement so that "every student might leave the third grade no longer learning to read, but reading to learn." The 27-member Reading Task Force represented a cross section of teachers, principals, superintendents, school board members, professors, community members, business people, and parents.

The Task Force members were unanimous in their conviction that reading is the most important academic skill and the foundation for all academic learning. If our children cannot read, they are on the road to failure. Teaching children to read must be our highest priority.

Each child's experience and culture should be recognized and celebrated.

The Task Force strongly reaffirmed that all students, regardless of home language or socioeconomic background, can and must have an equal opportunity to excel in reading. Each child's experience and culture should be recognized and celebrated. The strength and vitality of California's linguistic, cultural, and ethnic richness will be weakened if all students cannot fully and equally participate in society because of limited literacy skills.

The Task Force concluded that the 1987 *English–Language Arts Framework* did not present a comprehensive and balanced reading program and gave insufficient attention to a systematic skills instruction program. The *Framework* also failed to distinguish adequately between beginning reading and reading that takes place in later grades, issues best addressed with a revision of the *Framework* recommended by the Task Force.

The Task Force reviewed research materials and received testimony from various reading experts about what works in effective, comprehensive beginning reading programs. Based on its findings, the Task Force concluded that many language arts programs have shifted too far away from direct skills instruction. It was determined that a balanced and comprehensive approach to reading must have: (1) a strong literature, language, and comprehension program that includes a balance of oral and written language; (2) an organized, explicit skills program that includes phonemic awareness (sounds in words), phonics, and decoding skills to address the needs of the emergent reader; (3) ongoing diagnosis that informs teaching and assessment that ensures accountability; and (4) a powerful early intervention program that provides individual tutoring for children at risk of reading failure.

The Task Force also concluded that teacher education and in-service training must be redesigned, with a greater emphasis on beginning reading. The public schools and teacher-training institutions need to increase their collaborative efforts to improve the preparation of teachers.

The challenge to parents, teachers, administrators, school board members, universities, and professional and business communities is to recognize the fundamental importance of reading and to support actions that deliver powerful reading instruction to every child. If we truly believe that children are our most important asset and that the future of our world is in their hands, then directing our time, energy, and resources to ensure their success is both necessary and wise.

The Task Force has developed the following set of recommendations with the knowledge that all groups in society have an important role in helping children learn to read. Only by working together will this goal be reached.

Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 1

Every school and district must organize and implement a comprehensive and balanced reading program that is research based and combines skills development with literature and language-rich activities.

- The goal of a comprehensive and balanced reading program is that students will be reading beginning materials independently by mid-first grade, reading at grade level by the end of third grade, and making continuous grade-level progress thereafter. Each school and district must develop a plan to reach these objectives.
- The heart of a powerful reading program is the relationship between explicit, systematic skills instruction and literature, language, and comprehension. While skills alone are insufficient to develop good readers, no reader can become proficient without these foundational skills.
- Reading instruction should be flexible and based on individual needs. Some students come to school already reading and will make appropriate progress in classrooms that have a strong emphasis on language arts. Some students experience initial difficulty but can accelerate if provided short-term, individual tutoring. Other students have reading disabilities and will need a long-term, structured program.

- Oral language development is important to early literacy. Teachers should engage children in oral language activities by reading to them and by conducting meaningful discussions. Students should be encouraged to read aloud to others when they are first able to read independently.
- Skills development is critical in beginning reading. These skills should be taught directly, and each child's ability should be assessed. Kindergarten students need to develop phonemic awareness. The formal reading process should begin in first grade, where students are taught skills explicitly and have extensive practice using these skills by reading quality literature. Reading comprehension uses literature and language activities that should include many opportunities to read, write, and use oral language.
- Writing and spelling are absolutely necessary for good reading skills. Students should spend time writing their own ideas, sentences, and stories. Writing reinforces the idea that language has meaning and it allows students to take ownership of a story's language and structure. Spelling development for early readers should take place within the context of reading and writing activities, but other vehicles are also necessary, including teaching groups of words that demonstrate sound and spelling patterns.
- Students with well-developed literacy skills in their first language have an advantage in reaching grade-level proficiency in English. All efforts should be made to provide equal opportunity for reading achievement for the almost one in four California students who are English learners, including, when appropriate, academic instruction in the student's primary language. Children who are English learners need strong support in their native language, including oral enrichment to begin developing phonetic awareness.

The heart of a powerful reading program is the relationship between explicit, systematic skills instruction and literature, language, and comprehension.

- Children who continue to have difficulties with reading up to and including high school should continue to receive assistance in reading. Children cannot be expected to take on subject matter without adequate reading skills. Intensive, systematic reading intervention should be available to all children, regardless of grade level, who are experiencing difficulties with reading.
- A variety of whole-class, small-group, and individualized instruction is necessary to meet the diverse needs of students. Grouping should be flexible and allow for regrouping based on ongoing assessment. Grouping for some skills instruction is useful as long as the grouping remains flexible, with students reassigned as their needs and the tasks change.
- The Sample Reading Curriculum Timeline is provided as a resource for districts and schools to use in developing the components of a comprehensive reading program (see Appendix A). Schools can use this timeline as a sample for planning their own comprehensive language arts program.

2

RECOMMENDATION 2

Schools and districts must provide every teacher with a repertoire of diagnostic tools to monitor and modify instruction continuously, to ensure every child's optimal development, and to identify students who need help in reading.

. . . the focus of assessment should be on individual diagnosis rather than on group standardized achievement tests.

- In kindergarten, first, and second grades, the focus of assessment should be on individual diagnosis rather than on group standardized achievement tests. These diagnostic tools should be curriculum-based measures that include teacher observations and judgements as well as more formal measures of word recognition and reading comprehension. At this level, testing is concerned less with comparison and more with providing accurate diagnostic information to teachers and parents about each individual child's reading progress.
- The needs for diagnostic information are varied, and teachers should have a broad repertoire of instruments to meet these needs. Every kindergarten student needs to be screened for phonemic awareness with a quick and informal instrument. First graders need to be evaluated through a more systematic process of determining early reading progress. Each subsequent grade will require the use of different instruments that match instructional needs.
- Teachers should work in grade-level teams to assist each other in diagnosing students and in planning instruction for all of them, particularly the lowest readers.

3

RECOMMENDATION 3

Schools must have an effective, rigorous, proven intervention program as part of their comprehensive literacy plan for instruction, with an emphasis on early intervention for children by mid-first grade.

Early intervention programs . . . are essential so that children do not slip through the cracks of reading difficulty into reading failure.

- Each school and district must have an action plan for students who do not meet the specified standards. Early intervention programs, including one-to-one instructional support from a highly trained tutor, reading specialist, or other trained personnel, are essential so that children do not slip through the cracks of reading difficulty into reading failure.
- No intervention strategy can replace the comprehensive and balanced reading program which must be in place in all classrooms. However, as many as one in five children will still continue to have reading difficulties. Intervention should be seen as a safety net for a strong classroom program. Students in need of additional help should be identified no later than mid-first grade, and appropriate support strategies must be available.
- Instructional aides and volunteers and, of course, parents can provide important support to children who are learning to read. However, children experiencing serious reading difficulties should be helped by personnel who are highly trained in well-researched reading instruction programs.
- The intervention must provide both intense and extensive amounts of practice in reading and writing. Children who are low achievers typically spend little time actually reading and writing. Drill and practice activities are especially meaningless to children who do not understand the purposes and the joys of reading and writing. An effective intervention will have at-risk children reading and writing daily.
- Too many students placed in special education have reading problems that could have been prevented. Before students with reading problems are referred for special education, a series of in-class or out-of-class short-term interventions, such as tutoring, should be utilized. Special education resources can then focus on those students who truly have long-term, ongoing special needs.

4

RECOMMENDATION 4

California must promptly establish clear standards in reading at each grade level and develop and implement a state-level assessment system that identifies to what extent students and schools are meeting these standards.

- The Reading Task Force endorses the Education Commission of the States' report, *Rising to the Challenge*, which recommends that California establish statewide standards for kindergarten through twelfth grade (K–12) students, build a new statewide assessment system around these standards, and develop an accountability process that emphasizes local responsibility for improving student achievement.
  - State-level performance standards should be correlated to national standards to the extent deemed feasible. Specific standards matched to national assessments should be established for grades 4, 8, and 10.
  - All grade-level performance standards must be consistent with a comprehensive literacy program and include the areas of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. All students, including students placed in special education, must be assessed on the same standards.
  - Districts and school boards are encouraged to develop their own local modifications based on their districts' needs and expectations, consistent with California's model standards and national standards.
- A set of performance standards in reading and writing for the elementary grades should be established. The goal is that every student should be reading independently and comprehending fully no later than the end of third grade.

The goal is that every student should be reading independently and comprehending fully no later than the end of third grade.

5

RECOMMENDATION 5

The state educational agencies and teacher-training institutions must redesign teaching credential programs and require ongoing staff development in reading for all classroom teachers.

- The State Superintendent of Public Instruction and the California State Board of Education should immediately convene a summit with all teacher-training institutions, all professional education organizations, the Commission on Teacher Credentialing, and parent organizations to identify changes needed in credentialing teachers to teach reading effectively.
- Preservice and in-service programs should reflect a team approach linking schools, districts, county offices, and teacher-training institutions. Joint plans should make clear what the schools expect in teacher candidates and student teachers. Preservice education should connect to ongoing in-service education and continually strengthen teachers' knowledge about reading instruction.
- Colleges and universities should allow teacher candidates to begin coursework toward a teaching credential as part of the baccalaureate degree.
- Credentialing programs devote insufficient time to the teaching of reading. All K–12 teacher credential candidates should take additional coursework in reading instruction, which includes a course in beginning reading and a course with required, supervised practice in reading instruction. Candidates for special education credentials should have specific training in teaching children with reading difficulties. Administrators in training should be prepared in organizing and evaluating the teaching of reading.
- All elementary teacher candidates must demonstrate competence in the teaching of reading. A significant portion of student teaching should be devoted to reading instruction practice supervised by reading experts.
- Mentor teachers and teacher training institutions must coordinate their activities to support first-year teachers in reading and language arts.
- Staff development in reading should be a priority and ongoing at all levels. Planning for in-service programs should be done at both the district and school levels, with the participation of all teachers and administrators. Collaboration with teacher-training institutions is particularly encouraged. Staff development that includes follow-up in classroom application is preferable.
- Telecommunication technology can facilitate teacher networking and provide alternative delivery systems for staff development. Teachers should be encouraged to select and pace their own professional development, using the various electronic technologies.

Colleges and universities should allow teacher candidates to begin coursework toward a teaching credential as part of the baccalaureate degree.

RECOMMENDATION 6

A high-quality preschool experience should be available to all children and must be provided to every low-income child.

Teachers in early childhood programs need to develop strong links with families to help them reinforce early reading skills.

- The State Superintendent of Public Instruction should encourage preschool and child care programs to vigorously support and foster beginning reading skills. Phonemic awareness and immersion in print and literacy experiences must be initiated in prekindergarten.
- Every early childhood teacher must be fully informed on beginning reading research and practices and know how to implement an appropriate program.
- Teachers in early childhood programs need to develop strong links with families to help them reinforce early reading skills.
- The California Department of Education should develop a strong collaboration between preschool and K–12 curriculum reform efforts, both at the state and local levels. Planning and coordination are required to ensure effective transitions into kindergarten.

7

RECOMMENDATION 7

Districts must supply a large number of high-quality, appropriate print and electronic instructional materials.

Adequate and appropriate technology should be used to support the reading program.

- The State Superintendent of Public Instruction should begin a statewide initiative to make appropriate reading materials available for students in classrooms, school libraries, and public libraries. Similar initiatives should be developed locally.
- Every elementary classroom should have at least 1,500 books so that there is a sufficient supply of age-appropriate books and stories in all grades. Classroom libraries should be used to encourage students to read and write in class and at home.
- Reading materials of varying levels of difficulty must be available so that students are continually reading at the appropriate level. It is important to maintain a balance between simple language patterns and meaningful content in initial reading materials.
- Adequate and appropriate technology should be used to support the reading program, including the classroom instructional program, the training of current and new teachers, and the involvement of parents in their children's education. Technology can be used to support all areas of literacy, especially listening, reading, and writing.
- The state instructional materials evaluation and adoption process must produce and disseminate materials that support a comprehensive reading program. The California State Board of Education must ensure that the state adoption process is aligned with the comprehensive and balanced reading program described in this report.
- Communities must increase their support of local libraries, including expanding the library collections and the hours libraries are open. School libraries should be used to support classroom instruction and be a place where students can find books of interest to them.

8

RECOMMENDATION 8

Every school and district must mobilize all its resources to make reading a priority in the elementary grades.

- Local school district boards and school administrators should systematically review available personnel and resources and establish reading as a high priority. All programs should be evaluated to ensure appropriate emphasis on reading.
- The central focus of primary grade instruction must be reading, and every element of the instructional program in the early grades must be organized to ensure success in reading for every student. Actions could include arranging for small groups for reading instruction, adjusting the daily schedule to increase instructional time in reading, reassigning instructional staff to increase teacher-student contact time, creating flexible grouping to accommodate student learning differences, and providing staffing for early interventions. The use of all school personnel and volunteers should be analyzed to determine how they can best support reading.
- In kindergarten, at least one-third of the day should be devoted to language arts. In early primary grades, students should spend at least one-half of the day in reading and other language arts activities.
- Research has shown that class size of fewer than 20 students in the early primary grades and frequent student-teacher interaction are optimum conditions for effective reading instruction. Every effort should be made to realign staffing patterns to create smaller classes.

The central focus of primary grade instruction must be reading. . . .

RECOMMENDATION 9

The entire community must work together to ensure that every child can read.

A closer connection should be developed between schools and families to support reading efforts at home.

- An information campaign must be launched to encourage public involvement in solving the reading crisis and promoting success in public schools. This campaign should include families, businesses, the education community, and elected officials.
- Local school boards should hold public meetings to reach agreement on their comprehensive reading program and solicit support to implement this program. The boards, together with community members, teachers, and administrative staff, should review their students' reading achievement and reaffirm the primacy of reading instruction.
- A comprehensive reading program requires schools to work with families to help their children learn to read. A closer connection should be developed between schools and families to support reading efforts at home.
- Business and community groups should be encouraged to support and work with schools. Activities can include educational partnerships and adopt-a-school programs.
- Parents, schools, and communities should work together to ensure that children attend school every day. Schools that are safe, are child centered, and provide other family services will encourage the attendance necessary for successful school achievement.
- Volunteer programs should be established to support reading programs at various levels. Volunteer programs can help develop an important tie to the community and supplement scarce instructional resources. Volunteer leaders must be identified, trained, and supported.
- Californians should be encouraged to use the California Public School Library Protection Fund donation checkoff box on their state income tax forms to target money for school libraries.

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RECOMMENDATION 10

The California Legislature, the Governor, the California Department of Education, and the California State Board of Education must recognize that reading is the highest priority in California schools and resources must be allocated to provide the necessary support to teach reading in every public school.

The highest priority of government must be to direct existing resources to achieve reading success.

- The highest priority of government must be to direct existing resources to achieve reading success. This reform is achievable and needs bipartisan support and a commitment that transcends political expediencies.
- Specific attention needs to be directed to the issues of large class size, insufficient school library resources and classroom instructional materials, and the lack of computers and other supportive technology. These problems can only be solved with both increased funding and reallocation of existing funding.
- Summer school funds should be increased and more clearly focused on reading.
- The California State Board of Education should revise the *English–Language Arts Framework*. The valuable components of the *Framework* that emphasize literature, writing, and oral language must be retained. However, the details of skills instruction should be added, and the *Framework* should be organized around grade levels to focus on age-appropriate reading and comprehension targets.
- The California *Education Code* should be reviewed for mandates that distract schools from their primary goal of instruction, and these obstacles should be removed. The ability to focus on classroom instruction generally, and reading instruction specifically, should be reinforced by the laws that govern public education.
- It is acknowledged that administrative requirements placed on schools and classrooms have become a burden and detract from the instructional program. Reading instruction can receive full attention if unnecessary requirements from Program Quality Reviews, School Improvement Programs, site councils, and school boards are suspended for one year and evaluated for permanent modification.
- All related state-level documents and initiatives must be closely aligned with the comprehensive early reading and literacy program described in this report.
- The California Legislature, the Governor, the California Department of Education, and the California State Board of Education should collaborate to enact any legislation necessary to implement the Task Force recommendations.

Conclusion

Our crisis in reading is serious. It is time to act.

The conclusion is clear. Too many children in California are not learning to read, and we must take immediate action to solve this problem. Children who cannot read will not be successful in school or in life. If we lose sight of this simple fact, we will lose a generation of children.

The call to action is equally clear. Reading must be the first priority of everyone who cares about children. We must all work together and focus our human and fiscal resources on making effective reading instruction a reality for every child. Political expediencies and professional infighting have no place when so much of the future is at stake.

We can no longer continue to do business as usual. Parents must read to their children and make reading an important part of the home. Teachers must increase the amount of time spent on reading and use an appropriate blend of skills development and whole language activities. Administrators and local school boards must support teachers by reducing class size and providing adequate resources. Universities must improve their preparation of teachers to teach reading. The business and professional communities must provide genuine support to the schools. The state government must reduce statutory and regulatory obstacles to teaching and provide increased fiscal resources to the schools.

Our crisis in reading is serious. It is time to act.

Call To Action

Teachers, Administrators, and Local School Boards

Make reading a priority.

- Review all school and districts' plans, bring them into alignment with the Task Force's recommendations, and make reading the top priority beginning in 1995-96.
- Review all funding sources to create additional support for reading.
- Use the 1995-96 state budget revenue increase to improve the reading program.
- Increase reading instructional time and, where necessary, temporarily decrease instructional time in other areas.
- Decrease reading group size by using all certificated district personnel to teach reading.
- Purchase more high-interest reading materials and increase student access to those materials.

Use a broad repertoire of teaching strategies to deliver a comprehensive and balanced reading program.

- Read aloud to students.
- Teach a program that includes skills development and literature, language, and comprehension.
- Require regular silent reading.
- Incorporate reading strategies in all subject-area instruction.
- Use flexible grouping strategies to accommodate student needs.
- Use informal and formal assessment to monitor student achievement.
- Use early intervention strategies for students who experience difficulty in learning to read.

Encourage staff professional development.

- Develop school and district plans to increase staff expertise in reading instruction.
- Use staff development and district in-service days and other professional development opportunities to focus on teaching reading, especially beginning reading.
- Use mentor teachers and specialists (reading, special education, Title I, bilingual, speech and language, migrant, gifted and talented) to provide a wide variety of professional development opportunities to school staff.
- Participate in grade-level and cross-grade-level meetings to regularly examine student work and other student achievement indicators to improve the instructional program.

Parents and Communities

Make reading a priority.

- Create a regular family time for reading together and discussing what has been read.
- Use school and public libraries to gain access to a wide variety of books, magazines, and other reading materials.
- Join in partnerships with schools, local service and community clubs, foundations, businesses, and other organizations to create a community-based campaign to support reading.
- Work with local government and community groups to increase the hours that public libraries are open and the availability of high interest reading materials for students of all ages.

California Department of Education

Make reading a priority.

- Send a letter from Superintendent Eastin to every teacher in California, inviting them to participate in this statewide effort to improve reading achievement.
- Call a summit of all teacher-training institutions to meet with Superintendent Eastin to review the teacher education programs in California public schools.
- Develop content and performance standards and a statewide assessment system.
- Revise the *English–Language Arts Framework* to reflect the Task Force's recommendations.
- Identify funding for preschool programs.
- Disseminate information about successful reading programs.

Universities

Make teacher education and reading education a campus-wide priority.

- Examine and revise teacher education programs to bring them into alignment with the Task Force's recommendations.
- Work with schools and districts to provide professional development to staff.

Sample Reading Curriculum Timeline

Preschool Through Eighth Grade

THE FOLLOWING SUGGESTED TIMELINE IS A SAMPLE FOR DISTRICTS and schools to use in planning for a comprehensive reading program. Each category on the chart represents an essential component of balanced reading instruction, and the examples of activities in each strand represent a range of instruction possible in that component. This timeline is not intended as an exhaustive list but only as a suggested plan for districts to use in developing an effective reading program. Reading and literacy instruction also are integral components of middle school and secondary programs.

Reading programs should be dynamic and powerful and meet the needs of all readers, including encouraging students who are good readers to move ahead and providing intensive support for the lowest achievers. While the components in the timeline are suggestions for teachers regarding classroom activities, it is the students who need to be actively engaged in the learning process. They should have many opportunities to draw on their prior knowledge and respond critically to what they read and write based on their own experiences.

It is important to remember, too, that reading does not occur in isolation. Reading, writing, speaking, and listening are linked as a child becomes competent in English–language arts. There should be a deliberate forging of connections among grades, content areas, and all members of the education community whose work affects children and their reading abilities. The continuum of instruction should be seamless while recognizing and adjusting for individual needs based on each child's actual learning.

A selected bibliography that follows the timeline includes the research documents that provide the basis for the chart.

Sample Reading Curriculum Timeline

1 ORAL LANGUAGE, LISTENING, AND SPEAKING

	Preschool	Kindergarten	First Grade—Fall	First Grade—Spring	Second and Third Grades	Fourth Through Eighth Grades
Listening and Discussion	Listens to a variety of texts, both fiction and nonfiction Discusses a variety of texts, both fiction and nonfiction Listens to directions					
Oral Language	Storytelling Retelling Rhyme and songs	Reads aloud	Explanations Poetry Group discussions Plays Recitations Expressive language Choral reading Reader's theater		Reports Public speaking and debate	

2 AWARENESS OF SOUND, SYMBOL, AND STRUCTURE

	Preschool	Kindergarten	First Grade—Fall	First Grade—Spring	Second and Third Grades	Fourth Through Eighth Grades
Phonemic Awareness	Hears separate words Recognizes rhyming words	Analogies (e.g., "cat to fat")	More complex analogies			
		Hears syllables Recognizes word family pattterns Matches sounds of words				
		Blends phonemes		More complex segmenting, blending, and transposition		

NOTE: To avoid repetition in this chart, each activity is first listed during the year it is introduced, and the shaded area that follows represents the subsequent years in which that activity occurs.

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AWARENESS OF SOUND, SYMBOL, AND STRUCTURE (Continued)

Strand	Preschool	Kindergarten	First Grade—Fall	First Grade—Spring	Second and Third Grades	Fourth Through Eighth Grades
Phonemic Awareness (Continued)			Hears and segments initial and final phonemes	Hears and segments initial, final, and medial phonemes		
Print Awareness	Reading-like behaviors Recognizes signs and print in the environment Scribbles	Recognizes own name Handles books Has concept of letter/word directionality Writes some letters/words Understands initial concepts about print	Understands more complex concepts about print			
Syntactic Awareness	Uses oral language structure	Understands how words, phrases, sentences work Begins to use book language	Understands and extends book language Reads punctuation Understands sentence and story structure Paragraphing Beginning grammar	More complex grammar	Formal language structure of stories, poems, books, newspapers, etc.	

SKILLS INTEGRATION

Strand	Preschool	Kindergarten	First Grade–Fall	First Grade–Spring	Second and Third Grades	Fourth Through Eighth Grades
Letter Recognition	Exposure to letter names and alphabet	Knows most letter names and shapes	Knows all letter names and shapes			

NOTE: To avoid repetition in this chart, each activity is first listed during the year it is introduced, and the shaded area that follows represents the subsequent years in which that activity occurs.

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SKILLS INTEGRATION (Continued)

Strand	Preschool	Kindergarten	First Grade–Fall	First Grade–Spring	Second and Third Grades	Fourth Through Eighth Grades
Recognizing High-Frequency Words (Irregular and Regular)		Knows some sight words	Evidences self-correction and self-monitoring			
			Automatically recognizes 50 high-frequency words		Recognizes 150 high-frequency words	Recognizes most high-frequency words
Word Families, Word Patterns, Word Play		Attention to word beginnings and endings (e.g., "C and - at," "M and - at")	Recognizes basic word families and patterns	Recognizes most primary word families and patterns		
Phonics, Decoding, Word Attack		Knows some letter/sound correspondences	Basic letter/sound correspondences	Complex letter/sound correspondences	Remaining letter/sound correspondences	
		Recognizes own name	Knows decoding strategies	Continued development of decoding ability		
			Sounds out words			
			Compares similar words			
			Breaks words into smaller words			
		Uses syllabication				
			Looks for word parts/affixes			
			Uses graphophonemic, semantic, and syntactic cues			

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NOTE: To avoid repetition in this chart, each activity is first listed during the year it is introduced, and the shaded area that follows represents the subsequent years in which that activity occurs.

READING AND COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

Strand	Preschool	Kindergarten	First Grade–Fall	First Grade–Spring	Second and Third Grades	Fourth Through Eighth Grades
Reading to, with, and by Children	Stories and nursery rhymes are read to children	Stories and informational texts are read to children				
		Reads specifically designed books and other appropriate materials	Individual or small group reading of simple texts	Reads narrative and information texts as the primary learning strategy		
			Reads 100 to 200 little books		Reads 25 to 35 grade-appropriate books each year from accepted fiction and nonfiction lists	
				Reads and discusses stories, magazines, and informational texts from anthologies and reading series	Has in-depth discussions, uses a variety of genres, and reads in subject-matter areas	
		Shared reading				
		Guided reading				
		Independent reading				
	Reads at home Uses the library					
			Silent, sustained reading			
Comprehension strategies	Uses picture books and simple story books in reading for meaning		Reads for meaning	Organized discussion about commonly read stories		
			Beginning comprehension strategies, predicting, and connecting to what is known		Advanced strategic reading	
			Summarizing and visualizing		Advanced summarizing and visualizing	

NOTE: To avoid repetition in this chart, each activity is first listed during the year it is introduced, and the shaded area that follows represents the subsequent years in which that activity occurs.

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READING AND COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES (Continued)

Strand	Preschool	Kindergarten	First Grade–Fall	First Grade–Spring	Second and Third Grades	Fourth Through Eighth Grades
Fluency		Reads familiar materials Oral reading				
			Uses expression and phrasing			
Recreational Reading	Fiction (e.g., fairy tales, poetry, stories)					
		Different genres (e.g., poetry)				
	Nonfiction (e.g., true stories, nature stories, career stories) Multicultural literature					
Content-Area Reading		Math reading (e.g., counting books) Social studies reading		All content fields (e.g., math, social studies, science)		
			Reads newspapers and magazines			
				Reflective/transformative literature and critical responses		
					Uses reference materials	

5 WRITING, VOCABULARY, AND SPELLING

Strand	Preschool	Kindergarten	First Grade–Fall	First Grade–Spring	Second and Third Grades	Fourth Through Eighth Grades
Writing, Encoding	Pretend writing Makes signs Scribbles	Writes words (temporary spelling) Writes own name Group-dictated stories	Uses basic mechanics (e.g., punctuation, capitalization) Uses beginning grammar	Uses standard conventions of writing Uses more complex grammar		

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NOTE: To avoid repetition in this chart, each activity is first listed during the year it is introduced, and the shaded area that follows represents the subsequent years in which that activity occurs.

WRITING, VOCABULARY, AND SPELLING (Continued)

Strand	Preschool	Kindergarten	First Grade–Fall	First Grade–Spring	Second and Third Grades	Fourth Through Eighth Grades
Writing, Encoding (Continued)				Writes narratives, expository texts (e.g., organizing information for a report)	Writes more complex narratives, reports, description	
		Letter formation			Composition (e.g., sentence structure and paragraph)	
			Handwriting			
		Composes a variety of stories		Composes a variety of texts		
		Hears and records sounds in words				
Vocabulary	Gains word meaning from oral discussion and explanation					
		Learns some new words from reading and writing			Learns most new words from reading	
		Builds simple words with magnetic letters and other manipulatives	Constructs words from given parts	Constructs more complex word structures	Learns terms from context Learns word roots and affixes Uses synonyms and antonyms	
Spelling	Makes signs	Temporary spelling	Transitions to conventional spelling	Corrects spelling in final drafts	Individualized spelling program based on words in reading and writing	
			Spells words in reading lessons		Tricky spelling words	
				Spells sound families and high-frequency words	Spelling lists organized by sound theme and common parts	
				Works on individualized problem words		

NOTE: To avoid repetition in this chart, each activity is first listed during the year it is introduced, and the shaded area that follows represents the subsequent years in which that activity occurs.

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